

*Regional Development*

years, while in Quebec, this income increased from 85 to 91 per cent.

Someone mentioned here today, Mr. Speaker, the importance of this program for the Atlantic Provinces. It was established in the 50's that no less than 10,000 individuals left the Maritime provinces each year. This trend increased as in the early 60's the number of people leaving the Maritimes each year reached 20,000. This exodus has been considerably slowed down since the implementation of the plan for assistance to underdeveloped regions in Canada.

The government plan for elimination of economic disparities is a result of the will to govern, to eliminate regional disparities and thus achieve national unity.

Of course, this problem of regional disparities is not exclusively a Canadian problem. It exists, as the hon. member for York-South stated, in many industrialized countries. Even our Southern neighbours are having trouble with some of their regions. Yet, we should still not underestimate the endeavours and say in advance that they are total failures just because the anticipated results were not achieved overnight.

The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) mentioned also the advantage that the designation of special areas represents for some parts of the country. We can see those results in certain parts of the Maritimes and in the part of the province where I live, particularly in the neighbourhood of the proposed airport of Sainte-Scholastique. No doubt the same will happen around the future Toronto airport, at Pickering, where an important infrastructure development will be needed in a relatively short period of time, something which the municipalities concerned did not take into account in their budget.

There is, for instance, Saint-Jérôme, in my constituency, where they had to treble the capacity of a treatment plant in order to supply the Sainte-Scholastique airport with drinking-water. This expansion represents an investment of \$1.5 million dollars, Mr. Speaker, and were it not for the federal government's assistance through the special area program, the town would have been unable to achieve such an important project for the administration of the town of Saint-Jérôme and of the airport.

The same thing applies to the building of highways that have been made necessary by the establishment of the new airport. I refer to the building of a utility network to supply drinking water to the airport and to the communities that will develop around it.

The same situation occurred in the Trois-Rivières area, where following the establishment of a national park the government agreed to pay for part of the cost of the access road to that park. Of course, if the federal government is to agree to spend large amounts of money for the development of a tourist attraction for Canadians, it is certainly responsible for the increase in cost to the provincial department of highways which must ensure access to those sites built by the Canadian government.

The effects of the special zones program were felt by making those improvements possible, without however burdening the budgets of the surrounding municipalities and of the province involved.

[Mr. Dupras.]

In the municipality of Saint-Jérôme, which interests me particularly, we have experienced difficulties in 1966-67 in connection with the retraining of workers of a main plant in the city, namely Uniroyal Limited. That plant, which had established a reputation in the manufacturing of canvas shoes for many years, has been compelled for economic reasons to discontinue that production and to switch to a completely different field of operations. Since 1967, that retraining has resulted in a decrease in personnel of the order of 1,500 to 450 persons; the industry has always prospered from 1950 to 1960. But the establishment of a great number of new small industries at Saint-Jérôme has resulted in increasing those job opportunities eliminated by Uniroyal Limited. Those industries have allowed the workers of Saint-Jérôme to retrain without suffering economic hardships which could have proved fatal to the municipality of Saint-Jérôme which, after all, does not have many important industries.

There is a proof that the program of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion managed to save from stagnation many Canadian municipalities.

I felt that, as a member from the province of Quebec, which admittedly benefits most from that program and where unemployment is highest, it was my duty to explain the situation and give details on the benefits the act has brought to certain areas of my county.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the motion introduced today by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) indicating the failure of the government to make any progress in eliminating regional disparities. I do not get too much opportunity to speak in this House, Mr. Speaker, probably because I do not force myself forward, but when I entered the chamber about an hour and a half ago and saw the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) speaking, I thought that you, Sir, had possibly changed the order of business and that we were discussing the Explosives Act.

I can verify the transplanting of unemployment by assisting plants in one location while similar plants are being closed in other locations. I can do this by referring to the main industry in my district, in the city of Corner Brook, the Bowater pulp and paper mill which is the main base of the economy of the city, and where 350 employees were laid off because of weakness in world paper markets. Yet at the same time announcement after announcement was being made by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion about massive regional development incentive grants going to other parts of the country to start up new paper mills. This was an example of unemployment hitting not only the 350 people employed in the mill but also affecting another 700 or 800 woods workers scattered across the province of Newfoundland, with the result that the economy of a good portion of the province was crippled, not to mention the indirect effect on industry and business dependent upon the pulp and paper mill.

But in spite of all my pleas in the House of Commons to the ministers responsible, particularly the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), the matter was treated with complacency and almost disregard. This